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A Full ACCOUNT of the Late
Dreadful Earthquake

At PORT-ROYAL in JAMAICA, Written in two Letters from the Minister of that Place:

From aboard the *Granada* in Port-Royal Harbour, June 22. 1692.

Licensed September 9th. 1692.

Dear Friend,

I Doubt not but you will both from Gazets, and Letters hear of the great Calamity that hath betallen this Island by a Terrible Earth-quake, on the 7th Instant, which hath thrown down almost all the Houses, Churches, Sugar-Works, Mills and Bridges through the whole Country. It tore the Rocks and Mountains, and Destroyed some whole Plantations, and threw them into the Sea, but Port Royal had much the greatest share in this terrible Judgment of God: I will therefore be more particular in giving you an Account of its proceedings in that Place, that you may know what my danger was, and how unexpected my preservation. On *Wednesday* the 7th day of *June* I had been at Church Reading Prayers, which I did every day since I was Rect: or of Port-Royal, to keep up some shew of Religion among a most Ungodly Debauched People, and was gone to a place hard by the Church, where the Merchants use to meet, and where the President of the Council was, who acts now in Chief, till we have a new Governour, who came into my Company, and engaged me to take a Glass of wormwood wine with him as a whet before Dinner, he being my very great friend, I stayed with him, upon which he lighted a Pipe of Tobacco, which he was pretty long of taking, and not being willing to leave him before it was out this detained me from going to Dinner to one Captain *Raden's*, where I was to Dine, whose House upon the first Concussion sunk first into the Earth, and then into the Sea, which his wife and Family, and some that were come to Dine with him, had I been there I had been lost. But to Return to the President, and his Pipe of Tobacco, before that was out, I found the ground rowling and moving under my feet, upon which I said to him, Lord, Sir what's this? he replied very composedly, being a very Grave Man, *It is an Earth quake, be not afraid, it will soon be over*. But it increased, and we heard the Church and Tower fall, upon which, we ran to save our selves, I quickly lost him, and made toward *Morgan's Port*, which being a wide open place, I thought to be there securest from the falling Houses, But as I made toward it I saw the Earth open and swallow up a multitude of people, and the Sea mounting in upon us over the Fortifications. I then laid aside all thoughts of escaping, and resolved to make toward my own Lodging, and there to meet Death in as good a Posture as I could: From the Place where I was, I was forced to cross and run through two or three very narrow streets, the Houses and Walls fell on each side of me, some Brick came rowling over my shoulders, but none hurt me, when I came to my Lodging I found there all things in the same order I left them, not a Picture, of which there were several fair ones in my Chamber, being out of its place, I went to my Balcony to view the Street in which our House stood, and saw reer a House down there, nor the ground so much as crack'd, the People seeing me there, cry'd out to me to come and Pray with them, When I came into the Street every one laid hold on my cloaths and embraced me, that with their fear and kindness I was almost stifled, I perswaded them at last to kneel down and make a large Ring, which they did, I prayed with them near an hour, when I was almost spent with the heat of the Sun, and the exercise, they then brought me a Chair, the Earth working all the while with new motions, and trimblings, like the rowlings of the Sea, insomuch that sometimes when I was at Prayer I could hardly keep my self upon my knees. By that time I had been half an hour longer with them, in setting before them their sins and heinous Provocations, and in seriously exhorting them to Repentance, there came some Merchants to me of the Place, who desired me to go aboard some Ship in the Harbour, and refresh my self, telling me that they had gotten a Boat to carrie me off, so coming to the sea which had intirely swallowed up the *Wharf*, with all those goodly Brick Houses upon it most of them as fine as those in *Cheside*, and two large Streets beyond that, I upon the top of some Houses which lay levelled with the surface of the water, got first into a Canoe, and then into a long Boat, which put me aboard a Ship called the *Swan Merchant*, where I found the President safe, who was overjoyed to see me, there I continued that night, but could not sleep for the returns of the Earthquake almost every hour, which made all the Guns in the Ship to jarr and rattle: The next day I went from Ship to Ship to Visit those that were bruised, and a dying, and to Pray with them, and likewise to do the last Office at the sinking of several Corps that came floating from the *Point*, which indeed had been my sorrowful Employment ever since I came aboard this Ship with design to come for *England*, we having nothing but shakings of the Earth and Thunder and Lightning, and foul weather ever since, and the People being so desperately wicked, it makes me afraid to stay in the place, for that very day this terrible earthquake was, as soon as night came on, a Company of lewd Rogues whom they call *Privates*, fell to breaking open Ware:

Houses, and Houses deserted, to Rob and Rife their Neighbours whilst the Earth trembled under them, and some of the Houses fell on them in the Act: And those audacious Whores that remain still upon the Place, are as Impudent, and Drunk as ever. I have been twice on shore to pray with the Bruised and Dying People, and to Christen Children, where I met too many Drunk and Swearing, I did not spare them, nor the Magistrates neither, who have suffered Wickedness to grow to so great a height; I have I Bless God, to the best of my skill and power discharged my Duty in this place, which you will hear from most Persons that come from hence; I have Preached so seasonably to them, and so plain in the last Sermon I Preached to them in the Church; I let before them what would be the issue of their impenitence, and Wickedness, that they have since confessed, that it was more like a Prophecy than a Sermon: I had, I confess, an impulse on me to do it: And many times I have preached in this Pulpit things that I never premeditated at home, and could not, methought, do otherways. The day when all this betel us was very clear, afforded not the suspicion of the least evil; but in the space of three Minutes, about half an hour after Eleven in the Morning, *Port Royal*, the fairest Town of all the *English* Plantations, the best *Emporium* and Mart of this part of the World, exceeding in its Riches, plentiful of all good things, was shaken and shattered to pieces, and sunk into, and covered for the greatest part, by the Sea, and will in a short time be wholly eaten up by it, for few of those houses that yet stand, are left whole, and every day we hear them fall and the Sea daily Inroads upon it; we guess, that by the falling of the Houses, and the opening of the Earth, and the Inundation of the Waters, there are lost Fiftyn hundred persons, and many of good note, of whom my good Friend Attorney General *Masgrave*, Provost Marshal *Rever* another, my Lord Secretary *Rever* another. *Will: Turner*, *Thomas: Turner's* Brother is lost, Mr. *Swimmer* escaped, but his House-mate, Mr. *Watts*, is lost.

I came, I told you, on board this Ship in order to come home, but the People are so importunate with me to stay, I know not what to say to them; I must undergo great hardship if I continue here, the Country being broken all to pieces and disordered, I must live in a Hutt, eat Yams, and Plantains for Bread. which I could never endure; drink Rumm-punch and Water, which were never pleasing to me. I have writ to send a younger person, who may better endure the Fatigue of it then I can; But if I should leave them now, it will look very unnatural to leave them in their distress. and therefore whatever I suffer, I would not have such a blame lye at my door, and I am resolv'd, That by reason of the present distress, to continue with them a Year longer: They are going all in haste to build a new Town near the Rock in *Linnova*, the Guardian of this Island. The *French* from *Pitugnavia* did attack this Island on the North side, but were all defeated and destroy'd, it being about the time of the Earthquake.

June 28. 1692.

EVER since that fatal day, the most terrible that ever I saw in my life, I have liv'd on board a Ship, for the shaking of the Earth return every now and then; Yesterday we had a very great one, but it seems less terrible on Ship board than on Shoar, yet I have ventur'd to *Port Royal* no less then three times since its delolation, among the shattered Houses to Bury the dead, and Pray with the Sick, and Christen the Children. Sunday last I preached among them in a Tent, the Houses that remain being so shattered, that I durst not venture to preach in them, the People are overjoy'd to see me among them, and wipt bitterly when I preached to them: I hope by this terrible Judgement, God will make them reform their lives, for there was not a more ungodly People on the Face of the Earth. It is a sad sight to see all this Harbour, one of the fairest and goodliest I ever saw covered with the dead Bodies of People of all conditions, floating up and down without burial, for our great and famous Burial place, call'd the *Palisades* was destroyed by the Earthquake, and the Sea washed the Carcasses of those that were buried out of their Graves, Their Tombs being dashed to pieces by the Earthquake, of which there were hundreds in that place: Multitudes of Rich Men are utterly ruin'd, whilst many that were poor, by watching opportunities, and searching the wrack'd and sunk Houses, even almost while the Earthquake lasted, and terror and amazement were upon all the considerable People, have gotten great Riches. We have had Accounts from several parts of these Islands of the Mischiefs done by the Earthquake; from *St. Ann* we hear of above 1000 Acres of Woodland chang'd into the Sea, and carried with it whole Plantations, but no place suffered like *Port Royal*; where whole streets were swallowed up by the opening Earth. and the Houses and Inhabitants went down together! some of them were driven up again by the Sea, which arose in those breaches, and wonderfully escaped; some were swallowed up to the Neck, and then the Earth shut upon them, and squeezed them to death; and in that manner several are buried with their heads above ground, only some heads the dogs have eaten, others are covered with dust and earth by the People which yet remain in the place, to avoid the stink. Thus I have told you a long and a sad story, and GOD knows what worse may happen yet: The People tell me, that they hear great bellowings and noises in the Mountains, which makes some very apprehensive of an eruption of Fire, if so, it will, I fear, be more destructive than the Earthquake. I am afraid to stay, and yet I know not how, in point of Conscience, at such a juncture as this, to quit my Station.

FINIS.

Edinburgh, Re-Printed by John Reid, to be sold at his house in Bell's Wynd: Anno 1692.